focus undergo changes in response to new challenges and developments around the world and in the neighbourhood. As a result, there is a greater sensitivity to our core concerns.

Trade between India and Afghanistan

1710. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 250 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 21st November, 2002 and state:

(a) the other alternative routes of trade between India and Afghanistan; and

(b) the details of the items which are traded between both the countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) India and Afghanistan trade and economic relations continue to strengthen through commercially available channels and routes including through Bandarabbas and Chabahar ports in Iran, and through Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan.

(b) the major items that are traded between India and Afghanistan include tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes, rubber and articles thereof, cotton articles of apparel and clothing, and edible fruits and nuts.

Economic co-operation with Japan

1711. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of India's proposed economic cooperation with Japan, which was agreed by the Prime Minister during his meeting with the Japanese Prime Minister in September this year;

(b) the details of the proposed joint fight of India and Japan against global terrorism; and

(c) what is the current status of the ongoing developmental projects in the country with Japanese collaboration?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Prime Ministers of India and Japan during their meeting in New York on 12 September 2002 agreed that they look forward to further promoting bilateral relations in accordance with the

India-Japan Joint Declaration issued on 10 December 2001 during the visit of Prime Minister Vajpayee to Japan.

(b) India and Japan maintain that terrorism cannot be justified wherever, whenever and for whatever reason; they resolutely condemn terrorism in any form and believe that the fight against global terrorism has to be comprehensive and sustained, with the objective of total elimination of terrorism in all regions. It has been agreed that a dialogue on counter-terrorism will be held in the framework of the annual India-Japan Comprehensive Security Dialogue.

(c) There are 33 ongoing loan projects, 2 technical co-operation projects and 2 Green Aid Plan projects under implementation in India under collaboration with Government of Japan.

Steps by India to join G-8 Nations

1712. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken or proposed to take by Government to make India as one of the countries of the G-8 Nations;

(b) whether any diplomatic and political success achieved in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) There is no such proposal before the Government.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Pendency of applications at RPO, Ahmedabad

1713. DR. A.K. PATEL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Regional Passport Offices in Gujarat indicating their locations;

(b) the number of applications pending in these offices for issue of passports; and

(c) whether Government intend to open more passport offices to meet requirement of the State?